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A GARLAND

ELECTED TO MEMBERSHIP

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SERENDIPITY

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## ***William Addison Dwiggins***

DOROTHY ABBE

**A**s always, concerning Bill Dwiggins, one would speak first of the man, then of the artist, for he was one of those rare individuals who combined great talent with a magnetic personality. No one could be in his presence even momentarily without being aware of the radiance which characterized him – a man of subtle wit and gentle humor; sophisticated, yet ingenuous; and without pretension. Devoid of professional jealousy, he was always willing to share his knowledge with any who could avail themselves of it. However great his authority, he did not impose.

His innate talent found expression along many lines: calligraphy, type design, advertising layout, book typography, typographical ornament via stencils, illustration; wood carving and marionettes; the writing of books and essays; occasional excursions into architecture, furniture design, mural painting, kite-flying and weathervane-making; stencil and woodcut prints, watercolor painting; and the making of his own tools.

However familiar I may be with his work in these many fields, I am, even yet, amazed at his prodigious output, the more so because he worked deliberately and unhurriedly. The intense concentration as he bent over the drawing table – one stood quietly apart, waiting for him to look up. Presently he swung from his stool. With a final glance at the piece that

DOROTHY ABBE was a long-time friend and colleague of W. A. Dwiggins. This article was originally a talk given to the Bookbuilders of Boston in April, 1973. It is here reproduced in honor of the centenary of the birth of W. A. Dwiggins with the kind permission of Miss Abbe and the Trustees of the Boston Public Library who first published her talk in 1974.

absorbed him, he reached for tobacco and, filling his pipe, slowly turned toward you, smiling his welcome. This was ever his way – the smile, the slow unhurried steps, emphasized by the simplicity of his dress, always in white. Not only did he move slowly, but he worked slowly in the sense that the first effort was usually discarded, to be written, or drawn, or carved, again and again. And yet in this quiet, patient manner he brought into being more than most people even dream of.

William Addison Dwiggins was born in 1880 in Ohio where he grew up in the town of Cambridge. In November 1899, according to the local papers, he departed for Chicago to attend the Frank Holme School of Illustration, accompanied by the good wishes of a host of friends who predicted that he would become a master in his chosen field. There he studied lettering under Frederic Goudy, the type designer.

In the spring of 1903 Dwiggins returned to Cambridge where he established the Guernsey Shop with the intention of producing illustrated books, but this venture was short-lived for the following year he accepted Goudy's invitation to join him in Hingham, Massachusetts, where the Village Press had recently been relocated.

Although Goudy moved on to New York in 1906, Dwiggins had by then made the acquaintance of such men as D. B. Updike of the Merrymount Press and Bruce Rogers, then at Houghton Mifflin Co. Early in 1907 Dwiggins began to execute commissions for Updike who soon realized his potential, as may be seen in the fact that in 1908 he procured a grant for him to go to Europe, and saw to it that Dwiggins accepted, giving him introductions to friends and hotels as well. Dwiggins wrote: "It is amazing how much there is over here, in my line, to see, and how anything could be done without seeing it, I don't know. Them as made the trip possible may rest very easy in regard to the question whether it was worth while." Years later Mrs. Dwiggins recalled: "We worked hard in London, at our solemn duty of seeing all the right things . . . it was terribly hard work. He was so vividly receptive, his artist's eye saw a thousand times more than I did and the emotions of it tore at his vitality. He couldn't take a whole day of it. All the way through our trip we had to spend hours in our hotel just reading and resting."

Despite the fact that Dwiggins' interest in printing lay in the making of books, most of his work until the mid-twenties was in the advertising field. Among his many clients were the Strathmore and Warren Paper Companies, *Direct Advertising*, New England Telephone, J. Walter Thompson, to name a very few. The commissions were many but the recompense small, obliging him to do "pot-boilers" in the form of hundreds of furniture drawings made as newspaper ads for the Paine Furniture Company. Nearly all of the advertising work made use of his skill as a calligrapher, even the Paine ads at times, as did the numerous mottoes, cards, and calendars which he produced for Alfred Bartlett.

One is tempted to protest the terrible waste of a unique talent expended upon so many ephemeral pieces, most of which have long since been destroyed and forgotten. Yet the design and execution of hundreds of hand-lettered commissions, however mundane, served as superb training in the anatomy of letter forms.

Dwiggins was exerting an influence as early as 1912 when Will Bradley noted that the work of Cleland and Dwiggins had brought taste and skill "back into a branch of artistic endeavor which had sunk to the lowest possible depths before their appearance."

*Layout in Advertising*, published by Harper and Bros. in 1928, reissued in 1948, was the culmination of Dwiggins' long career in this field, and for many years regarded as the standard text on the subject. The *Saturday Review* declared: "Professional advertising men will welcome it, use it until it is threadbare, and be better craftsmen as a result." And it concludes: "It is a good book. Mr. Dwiggins writes as well as he designs – which is high praise."

Every now and then during these so-called advertising years Dwiggins took time out to satisfy the inner craving to produce the kind of work in which he took particular delight – things such as stencil and woodcut prints, or calligraphy for his small periodical, or the writing of stories and articles. This yearning to satisfy himself, combined with the unrelenting need to earn a living often resulted in periods of overwork, to the detriment of his health. When in 1922 he was told that he had diabetes, at that time a potentially fatal disease, he resolved thenceforth to satisfy himself.

As he wrote the following year: "Me I am a happy invalid and it has revolutionized my whole attack. My back is turned on the more banal kind of advertising, and I have cancelled all commissions and am resolutely set on starving. . . . I will produce art on paper and wood after my own heart with no heed to any market." Fortunately, starving was unnecessary, in as much as the next four or five years were to build up to the most creative period of his life.

His ambition was to make books according to his own insights which fell between the two extremes then current: the excessively poor quality of the trade books on the one hand, and, at the other extreme, the excessively precious handmade-paper, limited edition standard of fine printing. Dwiggins expressed his opinion of trade books in a pamphlet published in 1919 under the imprint of his imaginary Society of Calligraphers, of which, as D. Hermann Püterschein, Dwiggins was president; and, as W. A. Dwiggins, secretary. In essence *Extracts from an Investigation into the Physical Properties of Books* found that "All Books of the Present Day are Badly Made." The pamphlet was well circulated, "condemned, denied by those in the trade – and then the awful truth came out. It was all a fabrication, and Dwiggins had done it." But it made its point, as Paul Hollister noted in 1937: "Take any fifty 'trade books' of 1917, set along side them their counterparts of 1937, Dwiggins or not, and you will see what has happened to the physical properties of books and how often today's books echo his innovations. You can thank him mostly for starting it."

Meanwhile he had arrived at his own determination of fine printing. And it differed very considerably from that of Goudy, Updike, and Rogers. For Dwiggins' reaction to the machine age had evolved along different lines. Basically, to quote him: "It is not a matter of machine-set vs. hand-set. It is a question of an artist and a merchant." That is to say, the products of modern technology as applied to books were not obliged to be shoddy. He saw no reason why they should not be attractive, well-designed, set on the machine, and printed on decent machine-made paper. He thought that photoengraving should make calligraphy widely available. He wanted to use ornament that would harmonize with type as did

the fleurons of the early printers, but not by reworking elements culled from early printed books; rather by making his own designs.

As if to prove that he needed but to throw discretion to the winds – “cancel all commissions” – 1923, the very year in which he did so, was to mark a change of fortune, leading to professional recognition as well as providing books to design “after his own heart.” In 1924 he was made an honorary member of the Society of Printers, Boston. In October of the following year the Double Crown Club of London bestowed membership upon him, the Club’s list of 1926–27 showing Dwiggins as an honorary member along with Updike, Rogers, and five European designers.

Here I should like to digress to consider a style of ornamentation, uniquely his, which he had devised as a result of earlier experiments. He began by engraving small decorative units on many little pieces of wood ranging in size from approximately one-quarter of an inch to a little over an inch in area. These were to be used in the manner of rubber stamps inked from a pad saturated with India ink. Because he found that “the uncertainties incident to the process are maddening,” Dwiggins then tried to find a way in which he could make designs – unlimited in number, style, and purpose – from small units or elements. By cutting these elements in transparent celluloid, he found that they could readily be combined into the desired patterns, then stencilled with a brush and India ink. And so he cut hundreds of elements ranging from a dot or curve to small ornaments which could be used separately or in combination to build up larger designs. Thus he devised vignettes and other decorative pieces, in this way creating typographical ornaments whose sharp, knife-cut lines proved especially harmonious with type.

Dwiggins also used stencils in various other ways, particularly for illustrations, sometimes making them directly with watercolors through the stencil plates, at other times reproducing them from line cuts.

Twelve books from eight publishers in the six years between 1923 and 1928 confirmed the change of fortune; and in nearly all of these books Dwiggins made use of one or the other of the decorative processes just described. It was for *Modern Color*, published by Harvard University Press in 1923, that he used the little woodcut stamps to compose the ten chapter

headings. In addition, the binding is one of Dwiggins' choicest. Of this volume it was said: "That this is a book to delight the eye is due to WAD — that incomparable playboy of typography." Among the three books designed by Dwiggins in 1926 was *My Mortal Enemy*, his first for Knopf.

*Publishers' Weekly* declared 1928 to be a Dwiggins year, as indeed it seemed with eight books of his design, including two of which he was author as well: the previously mentioned *Layout in Advertising*, and *Paraphs*, his second Knopf book, a collection of seven of his essays. Although in all eight books he made use of stencils, one way or another, it is in *Paraphs* that one is most aware of a new kind of ornamentation. Another feature of these books, characteristically Dwiggins, is found in their hand-lettered shelf-backs. Of several hundred bindings of his design I doubt that there are a score for which he used type rather than lettering. Furthermore, I would venture to say that Dwiggins as a designer of book covers has not been approached, either in originality, or in the decorative use of calligraphy.

In February 1929 the American Institute of Graphic Arts held an exhibition of Dwiggins' work on the occasion of awarding him the Institute's Gold Medal. Thus by early 1929 he had received some of the highest honors that the leading typographical societies in Boston, London, and New York could confer. And yet his entire career in type design lay ahead of him, his long association with Alfred Knopf had scarcely begun, and the special books for the Limited Editions Club and other publishers lay in the future. These amazing facts bear testimony to the quality of the ephemeral advertisements which had occupied so much of his time in earlier years. With almost no book design, as such, to his credit, these honors signified notable recognition.

Alfred Knopf described his long and fruitful association with Dwiggins as "something unique in twentieth-century publishing." Underlying this successful collaboration was Knopf's willingness to give Dwiggins a free hand, defending him on the rare occasions when the author tried to interfere. Over a period of thirty years, for this one firm, Dwiggins designed in their entirety two-hundred and eighty books, contributing title page, or binding, or other detail to an additional fifty-five. Thus his dream of improving the physical properties of trade books was more than real-

ized, not only in the quality of his own work, but also in the example that the Knopf books set for other publishers.

Dwiggins eventually begged to be let off from making jackets, primarily because he had forsworn advertising in all its manifestations; secondly, because he felt that the vagaries of the trade had no place for his kind of jacket. Which is a pity, for *his* kind of jacket would catch your eye in any bookstore – by its layout, lettering, or skillful use of strident colors.

Another association that lasted to the end of his life was that with the Mergenthaler Linotype Company. By chance, a remark in *Layout in Advertising* resulted in his first type face, *Metroblack*, a uniform sans-serif letter which appeared in 1929. This was the first of a total of eighteen type faces which Dwiggins brought to various stages of completion, five of which were issued for general use, and five used experimentally.

*Electra*, a “design not based on any traditional model” was published in 1935, followed by nine small *florets* in 1936.

*Caledonia*, one of the most popular faces in use today, was announced in 1939. Although originally inspired by the work of Scotch typefounders, thence the name, Dwiggins explained: “One was not trying for a revival, one wanted something modern and individual.”

The suite of twenty-nine decorative units called *Caravan* was issued in 1941.

*Eldorado*, 1953, reflected some of the flavor of Spanish typographic tradition.

Dwiggins finished his work on *Falcon*, his fifth and last published face, in 1944, but it was not issued until 1962, six years after his death.

During the Second World War the Linotype Company, although unable to bring out new type faces, was very willing to have Dwiggins go on with his experiments in type design. Five faces were completed in the 12-point pilot size to a degree that they could be used experimentally in books: *Stuyvesant*, with its particularly beautiful italic; *Charter*, a special-purpose script type; *Arcadia*, “enough unlike anything on the market to do the trick I am anxious to do, namely, expand the range;” *Tippecanoe*, a kind of flexible steel-pen, Bodoni-like letter; and *Winchester*, an old style roman with an alternate uncial version.

In addition there are three experiments in Greek alphabets; an extremely legible 7-point *Newsface*; and *Alexandria*, the last face upon which he worked, was an experiment "to see what would happen if the roman forms were written in the Greek style of modelling."

From the early thirties the work for Knopf and Linotype were basic to Dwiggins' professional life. But that did not preclude commissions from other publishers such as Random House, The Limited Editions Club, The Overbrook Press, and others, resulting in some of his most distinguished books. These special editions all exhibited one or more decorative details such as hand-lettered title pages and chapter titles; vignettes and initial letters; illustrations; hand-lettered bindings with specially created ornaments, either drawn or made from stencils. Thus in the same way that the Knopf books allowed him to realize his ideas of trade book design, so did these special editions perform that function in regard to fine printing.

In 1930 some of Dwiggins' friends wished to produce a certain marionette play although they had no marionettes. Dwiggins was glad to oblige, not that he cared for marionettes *per se*, but rather he welcomed the wood-carving and theatrical designing that it entailed.

The first theater with its dramatically colorful proscenium arch was located in the remodelled garage back of the Dwiggins' home. Of the nineteen, 12-inch marionettes, some were made in part by the puppeteers working from a Dwiggins prototype, the artist representing each character to perfection in the carving of the heads. The costumes, also of his design, were made by Mrs. Dwiggins working from his sketches.

In 1937 Dwiggins designed his new studio building to conform to the demands of the kettle-hole across the street from his home, drawing the plans, and occasionally lending a hand in its construction, particularly in the addition of handmade latches, lampshades, and other decorative touches. The Studio had two stories, each with ground-level entrances, the workshop being located above and a completely equipped marionette theater below. The proscenium of this theater, altogether different from that of the first, was equally handsome. For the second group of twenty-six marionettes Dwiggins devised a far more refined method of construction

which he presented in book form in 1939 under the title *Marionette in Motion*, the clearly drawn diagrams on the left-hand pages facing the descriptive text on the right, written in his calligraphic hand.

There were, in addition, a half dozen marionette characters in the shape of ingeniously conceived machines made for a play which was published by Knopf in 1945 under the title *Millennium I*. The jacket states the thesis: "Automatic machines have been brought to such a pitch of perfection that you can almost believe that they do their own thinking. Suppose that machines take the next step in their own kind of evolution and arrive at a stage where they actually *do* their own thinking – become rational individuals able to plan and execute. Would humankind have to knuckle under and let them run the earth? If so, how do we go about recovering control?" Such an idea first came into his mind in 1911; forty years later he wrote in my copy of the book: "It isn't so very far out at that, what?" And that was twenty years ago!

This amazingly original and complete experiment with marionettes occupied barely twelve years of Dwiggins' so-called spare time between 1930 and 1942, but it had provided an outlet for this many-talented man that the graphic arts could not supply.

It has been stated that Dwiggins was a skillful writer. In addition to the three books already noted, two others should be mentioned. *Toward a Reform of the Paper Currency*, 1932, pointed out the visual deficiencies of the United States stamps and paper money. Written as a serious protest, it was phrased with his characteristic light touch. *WAD to RR*, 1940, is another of his calligraphic books, written in an italic-style letter, with stunning, large script captions, the book growing out of Dwiggins' generous response to Rudolph Ruzicka's inquiry as to how to go about designing a type face.

In 1937 the American Institute of Graphic Arts held another exhibition of his work, issuing a handsome catalog to commemorate it. Addressing a capacity audience at the opening, Carl Rollins of Yale Press said: "Here in this room then, one sees the result of a third of a century of creative effort in the graphic arts by a master draftsman. In variety it excels almost any other exhibition I can imagine. In faultless clarity of

technique it could be equalled by few contemporary designers. In the expression of a quiet, humorous, courageous personality I think its equal would be hard to find."

Ten years later, in 1947, Harvard University conferred an honorary degree upon him, the citation reading: "William Addison Dwiggins: Typographical designer, whose skill and creative imagination have left a lasting impress on the pages of our time."

The following year, June through August, The Bookbuilders held an exhibition of Dwiggins' work at the Boston Public Library. He was present on this occasion, attending the dinner which preceded the opening, and displaying his usual amiable disposition. But such activities drained him physically, and were, as well, emotionally distressing in that they recalled work long since laid aside and forgotten.

In 1949 he was made a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Boston.

Through the forties Dwiggins was occupied chiefly with the work for Knopf and the Linotype Company, and toward the end, with the productions of Püterschein-Hingham, the private press which we shared together. But by the fifties the long working days which had been his life were gradually being shortened, due to his slowly failing health, the increasingly shaky hand which had so long been a handicap, and eyes clouded with cataracts. During the last two years, until his death on Christmas Day, 1956, no longer able to do much work but only share a vicarious pleasure in the activities of our little shop, his humor and courage never left him. But that is not to say that there weren't moments of regret: no amount of past success could compensate for the ideas he had in mind which he knew would never be realized.

It is said that art should be judged apart from the artist who created it. On that basis Dwiggins' work will stand, and will be seen as highly original, at the same time resting on sound principles of design. It has been said that his work is not "monumental" – as if that were the only criterion. Perhaps he was nearer the truth in viewing life less seriously, less "monumentally." Yet as a counterbalance he had that extraordinary sensitivity which made him more than normally aware of the vicissitudes of life, a

sensitivity hardly to be endured unless united to an exceptionally joyous disposition, generous and understanding, so humanely disposed toward others. In some intangible way these qualities show in his work, and set it apart. One's perception of Dwiggins, the artist, can only be deepened by a knowledge of Dwiggins, the man, who said:

"It was a grand adventure; I am content."



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## ***Christmas in Early California***

**A**s a contribution to the Christmas spirit and for a bit of necessary filler your editor has assembled the following excerpts for your enjoyment. The first quote is from Dana's *Two Years Before the Mast* and describes a rather bleak December 25th in San Francisco Bay in 1835. The text was used in an undated Christmas card sent by David and Dorothy Magee.

The next two quotes follow the footsteps of Christmas productions of the Hart Press, Dr. James D. Hart, prop. The quotes are from the 1953 and 1947 greetings respectively. The first one is from Walter Colton's well-known *Three Years in California* which is the record of his experiences as the first American Alcalde of Monterey. The passage describes December 25, 1846 there. The final quote is from Major William Downie's autobiography, *Hunting for Gold*, and depicts Christmas Day, 1849, at the site of the present town of Downieville.

D. STEVEN COREY

This day was Christmas; and, as it rained all day long, and there were no hides to take in, and nothing especial to do, the captain gave us a holiday (the first we had had except Sundays, since leaving Boston), and plum-duff for dinner. The Russian brig, following the Old Style, had celebrated their Christmas eleven days before, when they had a grand blowout, and (as our men said), drank, in the forecandle, a barrel of gin, ate up a bag of tallow, and made a soup of the skin.

RICHARD HENRY DANA

As soon as the sun had gone down, and twilight had spread its sable shadows over the hills and habitations of Monterey, the festivities of Christmas Eve commenced. The bells rang out a merry chime; the windows were filled with streaming light; bonfires on plain and steep sent up their pyramids of flame; and the sky-rocket burst high over all in showering fire. Children shouted; the young were filled with smiles and gladness; and the aged looked as if some dark cloud had been lifted from the world.

While the bonfires still blazed high, the crowd moved towards the church; the ample nave was soon filled. Before the high altar bent the Virgin Mother, in wonder and love, over her new-born babe; a company of shepherds entered in flowing robes, with high wands garnished with silken streamers, in which floated all the colors of the rainbow, and surmounted with coronals of flowers. In their wake followed a hermit, with his long white beard, tattered missal, and his sin-chastising lash. Near him figured a wild hunter, in the skins of the forest, bearing a huge truncheon, surmounted by an iron rim, from which hung in jingling chime fragments of all sonorous metals. Then came, last of all, the Evil One, with horned frontlet, disguised hoof, and robe of crimson flame. The shepherds were led on by the angel Gabriel, in purple wings and garments of light. They approached the manger, and, kneeling, hymned their wonder and worship in a sweet chant, which was sustained by the rich tones of exulting harps. The hermit and hunter were not among them; they had been beguiled by the Tempter and were lingering at a game of dice. The hermit seemed to suspect that all was not right, and read his missal vehemently in the pauses of the game; but the hunter was troubled by none of these scruples, staked his soul, and lost! Emboldened by his success, the Tempter shoved himself among the shepherds; but here he encountered Gabriel, who knew him of old. He quailed under the eye of that invincible angel, and fled his presence. The hermit and hunter, once more disenthralled, paid their penitential homage. The shepherds departed, singing their hosannas, while the voices of the whole assembly rose in the choral strain.

It is an old custom here for the shepherds, when they have performed their sacred drama in the church, to repeat it, during the holy-days, in

the residences of some of the citizens. One of the first personages to whom they pay their respects is the chief magistrate of the jurisdiction; I was accordingly saluted this evening with their festive compliment.

The large hall, occupying the centre of the building, was sufficiently ample to accommodate them, and some fifty gentlemen and ladies as spectators. They brought their own orchestral accompaniment, which consisted entirely of violins and guitars. Their prelude had so many sweet harmonies that the listener determined to listen on. The dialogue and chant of the shepherds would have awakened their appropriate associations, but for the obtrusions of the hermit, hunter, and devil, who now gave much freer scope to their characteristic peculiarities than they did in church. The hermit forgot that his lash was intended for himself, and began to use it on others. The hunter left off snaring birds, and commenced setting springes to catch Satan; but his intended victim not only managed to escape, but to decoy the hunter himself into his own net. The hermit tried to disenchant him through the power of his missal; but this having no effect, he threatened to chastise the subtle author of the mischief, but wanted someone to seize and hold him, for fear his horn, hoof, or tail might come in conflict with the life-glass. During this side-acting, the dialogue and chant of the shepherds went on, though it would be difficult to conceive of any two things more wide asunder in their spirit and effect. The whole was concluded with the radiance, by the shepherds, who executed its airy movements with a lightness and precision of step that would have thrown enchantment on any occasion less sacred in its associations than the present.

WALTER COLTON

It was on the 10th of December, 1849, that we moved into our new quarters, and then came Christmas. We were determined to make the best of the festive season, even though we were in the midst of the wilds, far away from friends and relations. Our greatest trouble was, that we had but one bottle of brandy in camp, and it took us some time to decide whether we would drink it on Christmas or New Years Day. The dis-

cussion, pro and con, was very animated and resulted in the drawing of the cork on Christmas morning. It was quite early, when this important event took place, and we made punch with the liquor, using hot water and nutmeg. We drank to absent friends, to wives and sweethearts and to the great American Nation. Gradually, as the sun rose higher in the heavens and the brandy got lower in the bottle, we became more enthusiastic. I had a small representation of the stars and stripes in my possession, and we determined that on this day it should adorn our house. So I climbed upon the roof with a flag in one hand, a pistol in the other. I made a short speech, waved the flag and fired a few shots and finished up by giving three cheers for the American Constitution. Then I fixed the flag on the gable point, and we all shouted for joy when we saw it unfurled to the breeze for the first time in the fastnesses of the Sierras.

WILLIAM DOWNIE

### Frederick Allmer

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R. S. Pakusch, M.D.	San Francisco	Membership Committee
David A. Pitts	Santa Barbara	David Myrick
C. Richard Precious	Palos Verdes Peninsula	James Lorson
Christopher F. Stickel	San Francisco	John Windle

Members will be saddened to learn of the death of Lawton Kennedy, long-time Master Printer of San Francisco. Born in San Francisco, Mr. Kennedy's career spanned some sixty-eight years. He printed many books for the Book Club and for a number of years our *Quarterly News-Letter*. His friendship and abilities will be missed.

### ***Gifts & Acquisitions***

Through the goodness of our House Committee Chairperson, Mrs. David Potter, the Club has been given a unique copy of one of its early publications, *California* by Ina Coolbrith which appeared in 1918. This copy is inscribed by Miss Coolbrith with a line of her verse to Mrs. Potter's father, Dr. George D. Lyman. The volume also contains the original publication announcement as printed by John Henry Nash and a news clipping of March 11, 1925 commenting on Miss Coolbrith's eighty-third birthday.

From our former president Warren Howell we have received his latest publication, *The First Hundred Years of Painting in California, 1775-1875*. It was compiled by Jeanne Van Nostrand and contains a foreword by Alfred Frankenstein. There are a number of superb color plates and the book was well-printed by Lawton Kennedy. This book can be seen as a companion to the Club's 1975 publication *San Francisco 1806-1906 in Contemporary Painting, Drawings and Watercolors*, also compiled by Jeanne Van Nostrand and printed in the same format by Lawton and Alfred Kennedy.

Pasadena member Doyce Nunis, Jr. has given us a copy of two short stories by William Saroyan, *Assassinations & Jim, Sam & Anna*, printed for the California State University Northridge Libraries by the Santa Susana Press in an edition of 300 copies. Ours is number 98 and is signed by Saroyan. The book was selected by the Rounce & Coffin Club for its Western Book Exhibit of 1980 and is a fine example of western printing for the Club's library.

Member George Cabaniss has just given us another gift, a copy of *Missions*, published by the California Historical Society in an edition of 950 copies. Ours is number 16 and is signed by the photographer Mr. Stanley Truman and the author Prof. W. Michael Mathes. The photographic reproductions were done with loving care by Phelps/Schaefer Litho-Graphics Co. of San Francisco. The book is nicely cased in a three-part binding, linen back with paper boards and it comes in a linen slip case. This is another fine addition to our western fine printing collection and we thank Mr. Cabaniss for his continued generosity.

Our friends in the Moxon Chappel have generously sent us another group of their recent printing efforts, some twenty-one pieces of printed ephemera, for which we are most grateful.

The Berkeley publishing house Oyez, in the kind person of Robert Hawley, Prop., has given the Club two titles by William Everson: *Archetype West: The Pacific Coast as a Literary Region*, published in 1976 and *Earth Poetry, Selected Essays & Interviews, 1950-1977*, edited by Lee Bartlett, which appeared this year. Both are significant volumes and we are pleased to add them to our library.

The Club has acquired two important books on printing and publishing. The first is a history and bibliography of the famous publishing house *Messrs. Copeland & Day, 69 Cornhill, Boston, 1893-1899*. It was written by Joe W. Kraus and published in an edition of 500 copies in 1979 by George S. MacManus Co. of Philadelphia. This is a well-organized book and handsomely designed with help from Henry Morris. It is illustrated with all of the some twenty-odd press marks used by the firm and many illustrations of bindings and book pages. This book is a useful work on an important American publishing house which introduced new trends in publishing design.

The second book is rare: *Progress in Printing and the Graphic Arts during the Victorian Era*, compiled by John Southward and published in London in 1897. Southward, a noted printing authority, details the advances made up to that time in letterpress printing, engraving of all types including photo-engraving, stereotyping and electrotyping, composition, paper making, and typefounding. It was attractively printed by the house of George W. Jones which introduced here some extraordinary headbands and initials. Incidentally, the work was set by Linotype with an argument for its use as opposed to hand setting. This is a fascinating book, particularly the chapter on hand-press printing.

ALBERT SPERISEN

The Library of the Book Club of California has a medical book! Through the kind gift of George Cabaniss, the Club now has a copy of Henry Harris' *California's Medical Story*, published in 1932 by San Francisco's distinguished medical book store, J. W. Stacey. It is also a Press Book. It was printed by the Grabhorn Press. There are a few other important medical books, which are also fine press books - a few. But are there any other states which have their medical history so beautifully printed? I find it most appropriate that the Club should have this volume in its library. There are, after all, a good number of us medical people in the Club.

Harris' book is indispensable to anyone wishing to become familiar with California's colorful medical history. The work presents as well much fascinating social history of our state, as a good medical history should. There are biographical notices of many of the boisterous doctors who played their role

in our state's history, with a relevant section on our "Medical Women in California." There are the stories of our earlier medical schools, some of which still survive in one form or another. There are stories of our epidemics; California is still the only state to have had its own epidemics of the Black Plague. Medical societies, the medical press, public health, and the several medical philosophies such as Homeopathy are duly treated. In a word, far more than I can mention in a brief notice like this.

So I hope that our members, both medical and nonmedical, and Grabhorn admirers as well, will find the Book Club's Library more useful and enjoyable for this fine addition to its shelves.

S. R. SPECK, M.D.

## ***Reviews***

*The Annual Report of the American Rare, Antiquarian and Out-of-Print Book Trade. 1978/1979*, edited by Denis Carbonneau, is the first of what we can hope will be a long series. Many good features outweigh the occasional weak spots and it is full of information unobtainable elsewhere. It is published by BCAR Publications, Denis Carbonneau, Publisher. It is \$9.95+\$1.00 postage and handling and can be ordered from P.O. Box 50 Cooper Station, New York, NY 10003.

Denis Carbonneau's enthusiasm for the book trade has produced a most useful and informative volume. The bulk of the text consists of articles reviewing the trends and past-year activities of "Auctions and Auctioneering," "Reviews of Specialized Areas," "Libraries and Librarianship," "Conservation of Material," and "Trends in Bibliography." They are on the whole very well written and thorough. Two weak articles were "Small Press" by Michael Peich and the statistical survey by Michael J. Moran, "Rare Books and Special Collections Libraries; Their Impact on the Market." So few libraries responded that the statistics per se are meaningless. It is to be hoped that many more libraries will respond next year, and I suspect they will.

There are individual gaffes such as Lawrence McCrank's reference to the Brown Wrapper Press when he meant the Plain Wrapper Press of Richard-Gabriel Rummonds.

D. STEVEN COREY

The burgeoning art of printing on American college campuses has reached a new distinction and originality in a sheaf of Shakespearean broadsides recently received by the Book Club. Produced by James Trissel of the Depart-

ment of Art at Colorado College in Colorado Springs, they each use a kaleidoscope of overlapping geometric shapes in subtle tints, above, around, or as a background for three songs from *The Tempest*. The Goudy Old Style types are crisply printed in harmonious colors: warm yellows for "Come unto these yellow sands" and "Where the bee sucks," and a deep blue for "Full fathom five thy father lies," so that they speak the lines mellifluously. The heavy Arches paper, 15 x 22 inches, has just the right tone and texture to carry the graphic composition. Thirty copies of each were pulled on a handpress.

A fourth broadside on the same scale expresses Zebulon Pike's experience on first discovering the "Grand Peak" which bears his name. The text, from his Journal of November, 1810, is set as if it were a deep yellow prairie, surmounted by the repeated lines of full-width, large capitals, PIKES PEAK, in fading blues, like receding mountain ranges, until they catch the red and yellow rays of the sun, surmounted by a clear icy blue suggesting the sky. If this sounds overly literal, the effect is not. It is actually handsome and allusive. The widely contrasting sizes, the 72<sup>o</sup> Baskerville capitals for the repeated title, and the 22<sup>o</sup> Centaur of the text combine well.

The Shakespearean broadsides are available at \$150 the set, and the Pikes Peak at \$35 from The Press at Colorado College, Department of Art, Colorado Springs 80903.

Two books from the same press, while not as flamboyant as the broadsides, are equally well produced. *Sappho Poems* is in a bilingual edition, translated by Diane J. Rayer with symbolic abstract illustrations by Janet Steinmetz. The Greek is set in the lovely Antigone type of Jan van Krimpen, while the English is in his Lutetia face, sharply printed by James Trissel and his students on Curtis Rag paper in an edition of 150 copies. The book is bound in a jacket of gray Classic Text with the title in Garamond. All printing is in black and the price is \$7.50.

*Seven Characters* consists of brief sketches of colorful personalities, some from novels in progress. The format is an almost too generous horizontal, with half-titles for each sketch, carrying only the number in red capitals on a double spread. The text is in 16<sup>o</sup> Bembo, and seems rather elegant in consideration of the roughness of the subject matter. The titles and authors are set in 18<sup>o</sup> as side-heads on left and right pages respectively, aligned with the top lines. This is a novel idea but without enough contrast to the text, and it emphasizes the excessive page width. Novelty is perhaps carried too far in the binding. The seven blind-stamped rectangles on the front cover are a bit austere for the personalities described, and the sewing in seven short stitches on the front and six long stitches on the back secured by shirt buttons at the ends, seems too cute. The volume was designed, printed, and bound by James

Trissel with the assistance of his students (some of whom are among the authors of the portraits). It is priced at \$22.50.

Yet the qualities of imagination and workmanship in these pieces, all published in 1980, brings The Press at Colorado College into the distinguished company of other fine university handpresses: Cumington and Abattoir at Nebraska, Stonewall at Iowa, and Perishable at Wisconsin. Long may it flourish.

ADRIAN WILSON

### ***Serendipity***

Collectors of the Allen Press will be particularly interested in Lewis and Dorothy Allen's newest publication, *The Allen Press Bibliography*. Of their many beautiful books this promises to be one of the most lavish. The prospectus states the book will contain all necessary bibliographical details for each title. Moreover, it is the history of a traditional private press and the philosophy regarding it. The introduction and text will be approximately one hundred pages, 14 x 9 inches, set in Romanée types on Barcham Green paper. In addition the bibliography will contain more than eighty examples of art work from previous books and ephemera of which a number will be hand-colored and five or six four-page sheets from former volumes sewn in. The edition will be 140 copies at \$300 each, available from the press at 1129 So. Eliseo Drive, Greenbrae, CA 94904.

Admirers and collectors of Richard Bigus and his Labyrinth Editions will want to learn of his new address which is P.O. Box 1168, Athens, Ohio 45701. He writes that life in Athens is going well and that the press should be operating again soon.

We have been sent "A Checklist of books printed by Richard-Gabriel Rummonds and Alessandro Zanella at the Plain Wrapper Press 1966-1980 with a note on the Press by Kenneth I. Pettitt," Verona, 1980. A free copy of this checklist is obtainable by writing the Plain Wrapper Press, Via Carlo Cattaneo, 6, 37121 Verona, Italy.

Members will be interested to know that the Club will present a selective exhibition of the work of the Plain Wrapper Press from January 2 through February 27, 1981.

Dorothy Whitnah, Executive Director of the Book Club from 1962 to 1970, is currently putting the finishing touches on her third book, *Guide to the Point Reyes National Seashore*, which will be available soon. Wilderness Press of Berkeley will publish the volume in the same paperback format as the author's *Guide to the Golden Gate National Recreation Area*, which appeared in 1978. Perhaps because of her years at the Book Club, she supplies nuggets of historical lore and suggestions for further reading along with her descriptions of trails, campgrounds, and picnic spots.

On November 7 the Book Club staff was treated to the story, by Mr. J. G. Studholme, Chairman and Managing Director, Alec to Historical Editions, London, of one of the most astonishing and ambitious publishing ventures of our time, that of *Banks' Florilegium* by his firm. Over a six-year period some 738 botanical engravings will be published. They record the plants collected by Sir Joseph Banks and Daniel Carl Solander and drawn by Sydney Parkinson on Captain Cook's first voyage around the world from 1768 to 1771. The plates were prepared over a period of years under the patronage and supervision of Sir Joseph Banks but never published. He bequeathed them to the British Museum in 1820 where they remained intact and unpublished until the present day.

The plates will be published in thirty-four parts each housed in separate solander cases. It will be an enormous set since the sheets on which the plates are printed are 28½ x 22 inches (724 x 556 mm). There are to be only one hundred sets plus ten hors de commerce. The first two parts, some forty-five plates, are £2,750. The other parts will be published in groups of two every four months ending in January of 1986. The address of Alec to Historical Editions is 27 Kelso Place, London, W8 5QG, England. A lavish prospectus is on view at the Club rooms.

D. STEVEN COREY

Prices from recent book dealer catalogues indicate that Book Club publications continue to rise in value. Here are a few examples chosen from among numerous Club publications listed (in each instance printer, year of publication, and original price are given in parentheses): *The Santa Fe Trail to California 1849-1852* (Grabhorn Press, 1931, \$31.00), \$1,750; *Frederic Goudy, Joseph Foster and the Press at Scripps College* (Richard Hoffman, 1978, \$13.00), \$39.50; *Spanish Approaches to the Island of California* (Jack Stauffacher, 1975, \$32.50), \$68.50; *California: Land of Gold* (Lawton and Alfred Kennedy, 1971, \$12.50), \$35.00; *Sketches of California and Hawaii* (Grabhorn-Hoyem, 1970, \$50.00), \$195.00; *Wine Making in California* (Lawton Kennedy, 1978, \$22.50), \$49.50.

Members may be interested in joining The Private Libraries Association, which is an international society of book collectors. The Association issues a quarterly journal with illustrations and articles which include essays on members' libraries, specialized collections, the work of the private presses, reviews of new books, and notes on recent private press books. A series of illustrated books and pamphlets on various aspects of book collecting has been published over the past decade. The annual subscription to the Private Libraries Association is \$24. For more information members should write William A. Klutts, P.O. Drawer 289, Ripley, Tennessee, 38063.

The Book Club will be closed December 24th, 25th, and 26th; and January 1st and 2nd, 1981.



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